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COMMUNITY SERVICE NEWSLETTER is published six times a year by Community Service, Inc. Our purpose is to promote the small community as a basic social institution involving organic units of economic, social and spiritual development.

Perceptions And Values

by Libby and John Morse

The close-to-home and obvious environmental problems of waste, carcinogens, water quality and the air we breathe are strongly motivating. There is indeed a public awakening with focus on the 101 things we can do such as recycling. Also, there is a push to pass laws and regulate. Actions are absolutely necessary!

But actions alone with single-crisis focus means neglect of causative factors, such as population, and the underlying controlling forces of values and misperceptions.

Perceptive, deeply-concerned community leaders and many activist members of crises organizations not only see this interconnectedness of crises but recognize the need to address the fundamental and controlling matters underlying each crises. Eisenhower and Einstein both recognized the need to change the way we think.

We are so used to thinking about crises one at a time that we fail to consider the importance of their interconnectedness. They are at once, global and interrelated, tied to the environment: energy, resource depletion, population, foods, drugs, meaningful employment, male domination and justice--distributive and social. These contribute not only to socio-economic-political disintegration, unrest and conflict, but inevitably to a

sense of insecurity that forces military expenditures and an inadequate budget for dealing with the "causal" crises in the first place.

The problem lies in the fact that mindset changes are difficult to make after one's early formative period, thus resulting in false perceptions as to how the world works and attendant values, such as anthropocentric vs. a biocentric view; or a dominator vs. a partnership model for living.

Once we overcome the tendency to treat crises separately, we can, for the first time, begin to deal with the underlying and fundamental matters common to each; namely, the way we think. Values powerfully determine not only individual behavior but the support given to the establishment of social policies. Values, in turn, are affected by what physicist Capra refers to as our "crisis of perceptions": a Newtonian, mechanistic world view, "a system composed of elementary building blocks... [with] unlimited material progress to be achieved through economic and technological growth" Changes in consciousness are required. Foremost is the need to go from an egoistic, human-centered view of the world to a biocentric view--a question of values based on a reality. Riane Eisler ("The Chalice & The Blade") sees other changes:

"...The dominator model is what is popularly termed either patriarchy or matriarchy--the ranking of one half of humanity over the other. The second, in which social relations are primarily based on the principle of linking rather than ranking, may be best described as the partnership model.

"Through the use of the dominator and partnership models of social organization for the analysis of both our present and potential future, we can also begin to transcend the polarities between right and left, capitalism and communism, religion and secularism, and even masculinism and feminism. The larger picture that emerges indicates that all the modern, post-Enlightenment movements for social justice, be they religious or secular, as well as the more recent feminist, peace, and ecology movements, are part of an underlying thrust for the transformation of a dominator to a partnership system. Beyond this, in our time of unprecedented powerful technologies, these movements may be seen as part of our species' evolutionary thrust for survival."

Clearly we need to change the way we think. Sexism is tied to all crises, including the environmental. As example, consider the world's loss of over 24 billion tons of topsoil a year. In Africa the agricultural agents direct their teaching to the men, and yet it is the women who do the planting --erodingly so on slopes!

Each crisis organization must, not only "do its thing," but broaden its scope by: calling attention to the related crises, and by including materials designed to help clarify our perceptions and to infuse values. As individuals, we must not only act, but change the way we think, recognizing that the goal of sustainable development with life quality can't be met through actions directed only to the squeaking wheel.

Back in 1620, as an introduction of the scientific way of thinking, Francis Bacon published his famous *Novum Organum*, a new instrument. He was anxious to see false idols removed, the infusion of new ways of thinking, and new methods introduced. His publication did not indicate, one might say, just how the instrument was to be played; that is, the plan and strategy for its distribution and use for optimal infusion effectiveness.

One instrument for today is the pamphlet Envisioning a Sustainable Society. This can be sent to crises activist members, accompanied by suggestions as to how the ideas might be infused in their communities. Local circumstances can bring out imaginative approaches, reader-targeting and use-strategies. The pamphlet can be used to stimulate discussion in meetings of associations, religious groups with community leaders, politicians, parent-teachers, even at summer curricula reviews.

It goes without saying that when the crises organizations mail pamphlets to their members, they would encourage them to continue their crisis-focused actions, but also to use the pamphlet as an aid to infuse the absolutely necessary basic changes. In this way, we can collectively deal with the fundamentals common to all crises. Up to now basics have been neglected because of the singular focuses on crisis conditions, ignoring the controlling mindset questions.

Copies of the pamphlet can be obtained by writing: Surf Free Service Project, Lester Milbrath State University of New York, Buffalo, NY 14260.



Commentary

Community Thoughts

by Howard Mead

Each of us lives in a separate world. A good community can enable us to share these worlds with each other in meaningful ways so that each of our worlds is enlarged and enriched. Ideally a viable community creates an atmosphere of trust, protection, identity, and nourishment for its members. From this base it is easier for members to reach out to a larger world. One's community can be seen as a basic unit of trust. Where there is no trust, there is also no community. Community is a safe place to express the deepest parts of oneself, be

protected, nourished. It is also a setting to provide an opportunity for a much wider, diversified environment in which to be and become--more opportunity to express, know, and accept oneself than can ever happen in mass society without these settings.

Feeling a part of a community is based on a feeling of trust; experiencing a larger world than the self, but a world that one is a part of and in harmony with. It seems that, the way our society is set up, this trust is not allowed to develop. We have compartmentalized our lives so that we can no longer experience ourselves as whole and harmonious and cannot experience ourselves as belonging to a larger whole or harmony. This all has to do with experiencing fragments of our own and each other's lives. Trust cannot be built on these fragments of experience.

There is much to be gained by having shared experiences over a long period of time. This sort of experience is the basis of culture and is fragile and easy to break, and needs to be deliberately fostered. What we have done is deliberately chop up continuity and shared experiences and, with this, a sense of belonging to a larger community and at the expense also of an awareness of our own unique individuality.

The need for community is a need for a continuity of shared experiences--to see and experience each other in larger patterns of our lives, not just via words, but by direct experiences of living that will enable the joy, the sorrow, the strengths, and the weaknesses to be shared. Sharing adversity together can be a way to build trust and a sense of community, love, and appreciation for each other.

Communities can provide a setting for others to see me in ways that I cannot see myself. This may include criticism, but also an opportunity to appreciate who I am in ways I cannot and do not value myself. In other words there is a potential to increase my capacity to know, love, and accept myself.

Each of us has a world of experience and enthusiasm to share. The degree to which these worlds are shared is the degree of community.



Speech By Chief Seattle

The following is a slightly condensed version of a speech which was delivered in 1854 to mark the transferral of ancestral Indian lands to the United States Government.

The Great Chief in Washington sends word that he wishes to buy our land.

The Great Chief also sends us words of friendship and good will. This is kind of him, since we know he has little need of our friendship in return. But we will consider your offer. For we know that if we do not sell, the white man may come with guns and take our land.

How can you buy or sell the sky, the warmth of the land? The idea is strange to us. If we do not own the freshness of the air and the sparkle of the water, how can you buy them?

Every part of this earth is sacred to my people. Every shining pine needle, every sandy shore, every mist in the dark woods, every clearing, and humming insect is holy in the memory and experience of my people.

The white man's dead forget the country of their birth when they go to walk among the stars. Our dead never forget this beautiful earth for it is the mother of the red man. We are part of the earth and it is part of us. The perfumed flowers are our sisters: the deer, the horse, the great eagle, these are our brothers.

So, when the Great Chief in Washington sends word that he wishes to buy our land, he asks much of us. The Great Chief sends word he will reserve us a place so that we can live comfortably to ourselves. So we will consider your offer to buy our land. But it will not be easy. For this land is sacred to us.

The rivers are our brothers, they quench our thirst. The rivers carry our canoes, and feed our children. If we sell you our land,

you must remember, and teach your children, that the rivers are our brothers and yours, and you must henceforth give the rivers the kindness you would give any brother.

The red man has always retreated before the advancing white man, as the mist of the mountain runs before the morning sun. But the ashes of our fathers are sacred. Their graves are holy ground, and so these hills, these trees, this portion of the earth is consecrated to us. We know that the white man does not understand our ways. One portion of land is the same to him as the next, for he is a stranger who comes in the night and takes from the land whatever he needs.

The earth is not his brother, but his enemy, and when he has conquered it, he moves on. He leaves his father's graves behind, and he does not care. He kidnaps the earth from his children. He does not care. His father's graves and his children's birthright are forgotten. He treats his mother the earth, and his brother the sky, as things to be bought, plundered, sold like sheep or bright beads. His appetite will devour the earth and leave behind only a desert.

Our ways are different from your ways. The sight of your cities pains the eye of the red man. But perhaps it is because the red man is a savage and does not understand. There is no quiet place in the white man's cities. No place to hear the unfurling of leaves in spring or the rustle of the insects' wings. The clatter only seems to insult the ears. And what is there to life if a man cannot hear the lonely cry of the whippoorwill or the arguments of the frogs around a pond at night? I am a red man and do not understand. The Indian prefers the soft sounds of the wind darting over the face of the pond, and the smell of the wind itself, cleansed by a midday rain, or scented with the pinon pine.

The air is precious to the red man, for all things share the same breath--the beast, the tree, the man, they all share the same breath. The white man does not seem to notice the air he breathes. Like a man dying for many days, he is numb to the stench. But if we sell you our land, you must remember that the air is precious to us, that the air shares its spirit with

all the life it supports. The wind that gave our grandfather his first breath also receives his last sigh. And the wind must also give our children the spirit of life. And if we sell you our land, you must keep it apart and sacred, as a piece where even the white man can go to taste the wind that is sweetened by the meadow's flowers.

If we decide to accept your offer to buy our land, I will make one condition: The white man must treat the beasts of this land as his brothers. I am a savage and I do not understand any other way. I have seen a thousand rotting buffalos on the prairie, left by the white man who shot them from a passing train. I am a savage and do not understand how the smoking iron horse can be more important than the buffalo we kill only to stay alive.

What is man without the beasts? If all the beasts were gone, men would die from a great loneliness of spirit. For whatever happens to the beasts, soon happens to man. All things are connected.

You must teach your children that the ground beneath their feet is the ashes of our grandfathers. Teach your children what we have taught our children, that the earth is our mother. Whatever befalls the earth, befalls the sons of the earth. If men spit upon the ground, they spit upon themselves.

This we know. The earth does not belong to man; man belongs to the earth. All things are connected like the blood that unites one family. Whatever befalls the earth befalls the sons of the earth. Man did not weave the web of life; he is merely a strand in it. Whatever he does to the web, he does to himself.

But we will consider your offer to go to the reservation you have for my people. We will live apart, and in peace. Our children have seen their fathers humbled in defeat. Our warriors have felt shame, and after defeat they turn their days in idleness and contaminate their bodies with sweet foods and strong drink. It matters little where we pass the rest of our days. They are not many. A few more hours, a few more winters, and none of the children of the great tribes that once lived on this earth or that roam now in small bands in the woods will be left

to mourn the graves of a people once as powerful and hopeful as yours. But why should I mourn the passing of my people? Tribes are made of men, nothing more. Men come and go, like the waves of the sea.

Even the white man, whose God walks and talks with him as friend to friend, cannot be exempt from the common destiny. We may be brothers after all; we shall see. One thing we know, our God is the same God. You may think now that you own Him as you wish to own our land; but you cannot. He is the God of man, and His compassion is equal for the red man and the white. This earth is precious to Him and to harm the earth is to heap contempt upon its Creator. The whites too shall pass; perhaps sooner than all other tribes. Continue to contaminate your bed, and you will one night suffocate in your own wastes.

But in your perishing you will shine brightly, fired by the strength of the God who brought you to this land and for some special purpose gave you dominion over this land and over the red man. That destiny is a mystery to us, for we do not understand when the buffalo are all slaughtered, the wild horses are tamed, the secret corners of the forest heavy with the scent of many men, and the views of the ripe hills blotted by talking wires. Where is the thicket? Gone. Where is the eagle? Gone. And what is it to say goodbye to the swift pony and the hunt? The end of living and the beginning of survival.

So we will consider your offer to buy our land. If we agree, it will be to secure the reservation you have promised. There, perhaps, we may live out our brief days as we wish. When the last red man has vanished from this earth, these shores and forests will still hold the spirits of my people. For they love this earth as the newborn loves its mother's heartbeat. So if we sell you our land, love it as we have loved it. Care for it as we have cared for it. Hold in your mind the memory of the land as it is when you take it. And with all your strength, with all your mind, with all your heart, preserve it for your children, and love it...as God loves us all. Our God is the same God. This earth is precious to Him. Even the white man cannot be exempt from the common destiny. We may be brothers after all. We shall see.

Chief Seattle, Chief of the Suquamish tribe

"Liberty Landing"

An Arts & Crafts Community

by William Brunner

No intentional community can afford to cater to capricious artist/craftspersons and remain viable for very long. Many colonies become a revolving door to newcomers because they take anyone and everyone, with a general policy of expansion to make up for slackers.

Ten years ago, we sincerely thought we could maintain our Hollywood artist studio, hire a caretaker to manage our orchards, travel overseas in between feature-length movies, and somehow be part of a sober arts and crafts farm cooperative.

"Someone" has to water the gardens, heat the greenhouses, mend the fences, repair machinery, and pay the day-to-day expenses. That somebody always comes back to those with out-of-pocket-money invested or labors they wish to reap a reward from, long-term.

But money can't buy loyalty!

Next to sobriety and honesty, we appreciate down-to-earth folks with an innate capacity for spiritual tolerance of diverse points of view and faith. The "consensus rule," wherein all but one party is accommodated in the decision-making process, is workable in a small group of industrious adults.

We find soul-mate couples, wherein one party tends the farm chores while the other brings in an outside income, is the key. Artistic privacy is vital. Private art studios, separate home space, in conjunction with community projects, community workshops and community efficiency seems to be a workable blending of human needs for the highly talented artist/craftspersons.

Community energy fosters creativity. Many artists report their best creativeness comes when they are surrounded by others into highly intensive creativities. Road traffic, ambulance sirens, unruly youngsters, and a general proximity to "non-artistic" neighbors can be a downer to many.

For every oil-powered apparatus we acquired, we allocated equal funds to muscle-powered tools and equipment. We feel secure in wood-powered energy, solar equipment, and use of animals. Our unique commercial buildings we own in town offer business opportunities for the right parties: bakery-deli, equipment rental-hard-ware store, hostel association-art seminars, or convert the gourmet restaurant into an oldfashioned soda fountain-juice bar with a health food outlet from our farm cooperative.

Our farm priorities include: solar green-houses, earthworms, canning and juices from apples, pears, berries, and horses and mules.

Our arts/crafts priorities include: blacksmithing, timber frame construction, wood-working, print making, stained glass, photography, publishing writings, teaching arts, crafts, and hosting major art seminar projects. We invite new thinking.

Please don't be bashful. Money isn't the only commodity. Just don't come empty-handed or unresolved to jump in while things aren't all nice and polished (those who wait for that may have to form their own community or take second best somewhere else).

For more information send a self-addressed stamped envelope to: Bear Creek Farms, Sally and Bill Brunner, Glenburn Star Route, Fall River Mills, CA 96028.



Book Review

THE POVERTY OF AFFLUENCE: A PSYCHOLOGICAL PORTRAIT OF THE AMERICAN WAY OF LIFE by Paul L. Wachtel. Available from New Society Publishers, P. O. Box 582, Santa Cruz, CA 95061. 1989, paper; 336 pp. \$12.95, \$1.75 postage.

Velma Lee Barber

The Poverty of Affluence, by Paul Wachtel, is an interdisciplinary approach to some of the problems facing the world today. The book is aimed mainly at middle class Americans,

and explicitly intended to appeal to the general reader as well as scholars from various fields including sociology, economics, psychology and anthropology. Wachtel is a psychologist and the book leans more in that direction, but his economic analyses are also informative and easy to understand.

The main theme of the book is that the answers to solving our social and economic problems lie as much in changing our values as in working for change in our society. "The central point of this book is that our values and our way of life are at the heart of our discontents, not political and economic arrangements per se. But an equally central point is that this does not mean traditional political and economic concerns are irrelevant."

Throughout the book, Wachtel cites the loss of community, through changes brought about by industrialization, as a key component to our feelings of discontent and to an ever-increasing sense of importance being placed on possessions. As we lost our religious ties, our family ties and our community ties, we replaced them with toasters, microwaves, cars, new wardrobes and bigger houses. The more we bought, the less we felt a need for community and the less we experienced a sense of community, the more we felt we had to buy. We got trapped in a vicious circle which perpetuates itself with ever-increasing isolation and economic growth.

"Our present stress on growth and productivity is, I believe, intimately related to the decline in rootedness. Laced with the loneliness and vulnerability that come with deprivation of a securely encompassing community, we have sought to quell the vulnerability through our possessions. When we can buy nice new things, when we look around and see our homes well stocked and well equipped, we feel strong and expansive rather than small and endangered. But the comfort we achieve tends to be short-lived. Our efforts to achieve a sense of security and well-being in this fashion have ironic consequences... Their effect is further to undermine more traditional sources of security and thus to commit us to the pursuit of still further material progress compensation. We chase around frantically filling up the holes we have just dug, with little

recognition or understanding of what we are doing and still less ability to stop. And all the while we tell ourselves that this is simply what we 'want'."

One of the more surprising aspects of this book is that Wachtel does not try to "sell" popular psychology as an alternative to the overconsumption of goods. In fact, it seems that Wachtel too was a little surprised by what he realized about popular psychology as he was developing this book:

"When I first began thinking about the issues addressed in this book, I was attracted to the idea that personal growth might be an alternative to economic growth as a guiding image both for individuals and for society as a whole. Striving for personal growth --the development of what has come to be called 'human potential'--seemed more likely to accomplish what we seemed to be trying to do via economic growth: provide a fuller and more satisfying life for ourselves....After a while, however, I began to feel uneasy. Playing off the two kinds of growth seemed a bit too glib. Gradually my thinking began to shift, and a notion almost the opposite of what I had originally intended took hold. I began to see that in many respects the idea of personal or psychological growth was but one more manifestation of a growth-obsessed society. The emphasis on growth, change, and self-betterment that one sees in much of Western psychology at least since Freud's time seemed to me part of the very thrust that had created our environmental crisis and our endless discontent. Rather than an alternative to economic growth, this psychology began to seem like a psychology of or for economic growth, filled with the same images of conquest and expansion, and the same highly individualistic assumptions that characterized the rest of our culture."

Wachtel's alternative to the growth model, in both economics as well in psychology, is what he calls a "psycho-ecological" point of view. This point of view would highlight the gains to be had from living a lifestyle rich in psychological and social pleasures. There would be little emphasis on austerity or "belt tightening," but rather a shift in values so that people would feel as if they were moving toward a truly better life rather than giving up the good life (a life full of

more possessions than one can possibly use) due to a threat of ecological disaster.

Wachtel has some very specific ways in which to think about changing society: job shifting, moving the workforce away from jobs that create problems in our society toward jobs that serve us all; job sharing, where more than one person would share a job; eliminating the necessity of cars by offering workable solutions in mass transit and bike paths. But all of those big changes would rest on a solid basis of value shifting. It won't work to merely redistribute wealth or the ownership of the means of production. All major social changes must be made by people seeking a truly better life, not just the redistribution of the oppressive society's status or wealth. Unless there is a fundamental shift in values, the new society will simply carry out the agenda of the previous powers.

What does a middle class American do to work toward change? Wachtel suggests:

"Concrete steps that are at least semi-irrevocable: joining together, for example, with a few friends who have similarly come to understand the contradictions and self-deceptions of the consumer treadmill; making explicit and public commitments to each other about changes you will make in the next week or month; meeting regularly in consciousness-raising sessions to spur each other on to adhere to the mutually given promises; talking at those meetings about the difficulties of living differently when the rest of the society hasn't yet; and (crucially) considering how you might work to bring about the larger social changes that will make every step along the way easier."

These suggestions fit well with Wachtel's idea that we need to develop community, a kind of community that fits our technically oriented, affluent culture. Coming together to think about and make commitments to fundamentally change the way in which we make and spend our money is creating "community" for middle class Americans.

I don't agree with everything Wachtel says or how he says it in The Poverty of Affluence. Sometimes he uses too many words and even though he tries to appeal to the "general

reader," there are times when he engages in academic name dropping to the degree that I felt left out of the conversation. Also, I don't think that his analysis includes some important ideas. Two of the main economic points that he didn't address are the degree to which we have become a nation of debtors and the delicate balance most of us must maintain in order to survive economically. Although it is true that many more people have in their possession many more goods than in previous generations, most of those goods were bought on credit. And most people are but a paycheck or two away from economic disaster. Perhaps those two factors heavily influence the degree to which people feel impoverished in their current state of affluence. It seems like a major oversight to ignore those factors.

Still, I recommend The Poverty of Affluence. There is enough good thinking in this book to make it worth our time and energy. In keeping with Wachtel's assertion that middle class Americans need to develop community, I suggest that this book be discussed in a support group of middle class Americans who want to make a difference and need some direction about just how to do that. And have a basic economics text nearby. It'll help when the names and theories start piling up.



Readers Write

ABOUT ERNEST MORGAN'S COMMENTARY ON THE
PERSIAN GULF CRISIS WHICH APPEARED IN THE
JAN/FEB 1991 COMMUNITY SERVICE NEWSLETTER

Editor's note: We are departing somewhat from our usual format in this column to include complete letters to Ernest and his responses.

Dear Ernest:

I write to chide you, in a brotherly sort of way, for the simplistic elements in your brief article in the January/February issue of Community Service Newsletter, and for the unwonted optimism in outlining an approach to settlement of the Arab-Israeli problem.

With no intent to claim a presentation of the problem in depth, lest you ask "where is the beef," here is mine.

To say "Christian intolerance gave rise to antisemitism and this led to Zionism" is an astonishing oversimplification for one who makes his claim to understanding of the problem. When the Jewish community of Alexandria, in the pre-Christian heyday of that city, bought its freedom from participation in the wars of that early center of civilization, the seeds of future conflict were laid. The self-conscious "chosen people" had spoken. Omit that, in defiance of the work of that British student of Jewish-Christian history, whose name I regret I cannot call up, and your structure collapses. I am in poor shape to be convincing, since all my notes and references to his seminal studies were destroyed in the Jordanian riots of 1956. But - please! - do not so easily succumb to a confident but unwarranted simplicity.

Second of my complaints, of unlicensed optimism, attacks your assumption that the Middle East problem can be settled at all until the people of that area, themselves want it settled, which very clearly, in the broad sense of political relations, they do not now want. Specifically, to equate that situation with the growth in Western Europe out of the centuries of hatred and bloody conflict, a success due (you aver) to the influence, planning and financing of outside forces, is a total non sequitur. I am saying that outside forces will not successfully settle the Middle East problem; to say that "we" can achieve this "if we have the imagination and the will" is breathtakingly unworthy of you.

Both barrels, friend Ernest, a full 29 cents worth, since this is the day of the current triumph of the U.S. Postal Service over us. I hope it does not unsuitably transgress the boundaries of friendship and respect that have long existed between us. I must further emphasize that nothing said here must be allowed to reduce our appreciation of your long-continued, purposeful advocacy of the Palestinian cause. That's a given.

Best Greetings to you.

Paul Johnson, Santa Rosa, CA

ERNEST'S RESPONSE TO PAUL JOHNSON:

Paul Johnson, with whom I served in the Gaza Strip, is certainly better acquainted than

I with the history and circumstances of the Middle East. Just the same, I differ with him on the roots of Christian intolerance toward the Jews.

Having themselves experienced persecution in the early years the Christians, when they came into power, persecuted all other religions and succeeded in wiping out all minority religions in Europe--except the Jewish religion, which managed to hang on. It was historically the Russian Pogroms and other persecutions of the Jews that led directly to the rise of political Zionism.

It is true, as Paul says, that the people of the Middle East must themselves want peace before they can get it. But peace there won't happen without help from outside. The rest of the world has dabbled in Middle East politics too long to just step aside and expect the people there to get unscrambled--particularly in light of Israeli intransigence.

American support of Israel must be made contingent on that nation relaxing its expansionist policies. These policies were actively supported by Menachin Begin (formerly head of terrorist Irgun) and are currently supported by Yitzak Shamir (formerly a leader in the terrorist Stern Gang). Such a relaxation is an absolute prerequisite of any durable peace in the Middle East.

The European Community of Nations would never have come about without American encouragement--especially the Marshall Plan. Similar encouragement, plus U.N. assistance, could, I think, bring lasting peace in the Middle East. A complicated job, to be sure, but definitely possible.

Ernest Morgan:

[The following Annexation, Not War is] slightly if irreverently germane to your excellent commentary in the Jan/Feb 1991 Newsletter.

If the ground war is called off, maybe it isn't too late. Indeed, it's never too late.

Pax,
Edward Myers, Damariscotta, ME

Annexation, Not War Make Saudi Arabia the 51st State

by Edward Myers

The following is a condensation of an essay of Edward Myers which appeared in the Maine Times of November 30, 1990, a copy of which he sent to Ernest.

While we have garrisoned Saudi Arabia against the Iraqi threat, the United States seems to have done so without any settled policy--either it's to protect our "right" to cheap oil (which doesn't seem to be working out) or to make the world safe for democracy (which in the case of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia is apparently to make the world safe for plutocracy).

Either way, the troops and the fleet are there, and it's time for some cross-country thinking, for a big leap ahead, to be sure of a happy outcome. One suggestion is to make Saudi Arabia the 51st state. This bold breakthrough has a lot of advantages, and many striking possibilities.

The U. S., under heavy pressure from the deficit, needs a state that is truly solvent, has \$7,000 of foreign investments for each man, woman and child (compared with \$10,000 of debt for each American citizen), will set an example of fiscal responsibility to all the other states.

Desert Shield will become a domestic operation, meaning that troops and fleet won't get extra overseas pay thus saving many dollars for the taxpayers.

For too long has the manifest destiny of this country been content with an outpost state many thousands of miles west across the Pacific Ocean. Hawaii should be balanced with an outpost state many thousands of miles east across the Atlantic.

Saudi statehood will be supported by all environmentalists, as it will no longer be necessary to explore for oil on the forbidding wilderness of the North Slope and the raging seas of Georges Bank.

Saudi statehood will make the U. S. a member of OPEC, thereby gaining representation

for the first time of a consumer of oil among this cartel of providers.

The Saudis will no longer have to buy billions of dollars worth of arms from the U. S., a source of profound appreciation and irritation to the Israelis.

It will no longer be necessary to prop up the Israelis with billions of dollars every year--Iran, Iraq and Jordan will become bordering countries of the U. S., like Canada, and whatever unpleasantness they might feel will be tempered by having the U. S. as their major trading partner.

With Saudi Arabia as a state, the U. S. can take the lead in developing the Middle East Economic Community (MEEC), which becomes a counterbalance to the European Economic Community scheduled for 1992. (Sly jokes about the MEEC inheriting the earth will be permitted under the First Amendment, but not encouraged.)

Reservations about altering the U. S. flag can be easily overcome. Instead of complicating things with another star, all that needs to be added is an Islamic crescent in the upper left-hand corner. The presence of the crescent will also go far to reduce flag-burning in the Arab nations, formerly a feature on evening TV news.

In a single stroke, the U. S. will have accomplished George Bush's goal of a "new world order," giving him a new stature in the popularity polls without firing a single shot. As soon as the Commonwealth of Saudi Arabia is in the union, the name of the Arab League must of course be changed --the natural substitute has to be "Bush League," in honor of the initiator.

Dear Edwards Myers:

I am delighted with your suggestion that we make Saudi Arabia the 51st state. Our military forces are already occupying that country, and that annexation could very likely be carried out with the stroke of a pen!

While we're at it, let's take over Israel, too. Then we could take over their foreign policy and straighten out the Middle East

once and for all. We would add a little Star of David along with the crescent, to the American flag.

With those steps accomplished, we could entertain applications for statehood from the remaining countries of the Middle East. That's a wonderful program. I'm embarrassed not to have thought of it myself.

Cordially,
Ernest Morgan, Burnsville, NC

Announcements

PADANARAM CONVENTION, MAY 24-27

"Kingdomism," the next covenant of human society, is being formed by many small settlements of people who live together cooperatively. Millions of creative, visionary people are interested in forming a better world.

This convention will focus upon philosophy, economics, education, religion and social aspects of building a worldwide network of communities that will cooperate together.

Everyone is welcome. We invite you to share your conclusions, convictions, doctrines, theories and ideologies.

If planning to stay in our scenic valley, bring bedding, tents, sleeping bags and outdoor clothing. Simple meals will be served. Motels are available in Bedford. Sessions: 12 Noon daily; 7:30 PM evenings, May 24-27.

For more information write: Padanaram Settlement, R.R. 1, Box 478, Williams, IN 47470; (812) 388-5599 or 388-5571.

COMMUNAL SOCIETIES: VALUES AND STRUCTURES JULY 25-28, 1991

An International Conference co-sponsored by the International Communal Studies Association, The Communal Studies Association, Fellowship for Intentional Community and The Young Center of Elizabethtown College.

For more information contact: The Young Center for the Study of Anabaptist and Pietist Groups, Elizabethtown College, One Alpha Dr; Elizabethtown, PA 17022; (717) 367-1151.

INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL ECOLOGY SUMMER PROGRAM

The Institute for Social Ecology is offering the following programs to be held on the Goddard College campus in Plainfield, VT.

June 7-21: Design For Sustainable Communities

June 14-21: Social Ecology and Higher Education

June 21-July 21: Ecology and Community

Aug. 9-18: Women and Community Development

For more information contact: Paula Emery
Institute For Social Ecology, PO Box 89, Dept R, Plainfield, VT 05667; (802)454-8493.

THE FOUNDATION FOR COMMUNITY ENCOURAGEMENT

The Foundation For Community Encouragement, Inc., is sponsoring a conference on "Community in Education," July 12-14, and "Community Continuity Conference," August 2-4.

The Foundation is committed to live, learn and teach the principles of community. It is an organization which contains a great deal of diversity. Together people are learning and perhaps modeling another way of life within our culture.

For more information write or call: Foundation For Community Encouragement, 7616 Gleason Rd., Knoxville, TN 37919; (615)690-4334.



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Membership

Membership is a means of supporting and sharing the work of Community Service. The basic \$25 annual membership contribution includes a subscription to our bi-monthly NEWSLETTER and 10% off Community Service-published literature. Larger contributions are always needed, however, and smaller ones will be gladly accepted. Community Service is a nonprofit corporation which depends on contributions and the sale of literature to fund its work so that it can offer its services to those who need them. All contributions are appreciated, needed and tax-deductible. Due to added postage costs, overseas membership is \$30 in U.S. currency.

Have Your Friends Seen The Newsletter?

Please send the names and addresses of your friends who might enjoy receiving a sample NEWSLETTER and booklist. (If you wish specific issues sent, please send \$1 per copy.

Editor's Note

We welcome letters to the editor (under 300 words) and articles (700-2000 words) about any notable communities or people who are improving the quality of life in their communities. Please enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope if you wish the article returned. The only compensation we can offer is the satisfaction of seeing your words in print and knowing you have helped spread encouraging and/or educational information.

Editor's Note #2

We occasionally exchange our mailing list with a group with similar purposes such as the Arthur Morgan School at Celo or Communities Magazine. If you do not wish us to give your name to anyone, please let us know.

Address Change

If there is an error on your mailing label, please send the old label and any corrections to us promptly. It increases our cost greatly if the Post Office notifies us of moves, not to mention that we like hearing from our members and friends!

Consultation

Community Service makes no set charge for formal or informal consultation. Customarily, we ask for a contribution at a rate equal to the client's hourly earnings.

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You can tell when your Community Service membership expires by looking at the month and year in the upper left corner of your mailing label. Please renew your membership now if it has expired or will expire before 6/91. The minimum membership contribution is \$25 per year. We do not send individual reminders to renew.

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